



# Safer Choice 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Partner of the Year Awards

August 2021

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# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Safer Choice Partner of the Year (PoY) Awards



- Purpose: to recognize leadership contributions of Safer Choice partners and stakeholders who have shown achievement in the design, manufacture, selection, and use of products with safer chemicals, that further outstanding or innovative source reduction
- **New this year:** EPA especially encourages submission of applications that show how the applicant's work promotes environmental justice, bolsters resilience to the impacts of climate change, results in cleaner air or water, or improves drinking water quality
- Program participants eligible for PoY awards
  - Product manufacturers
  - Chemical manufacturers
  - Retailers
  - Purchasers & Distributors
  - Supporters



# Partners Value PoY Award



"We are pleased to receive this EPA recognition of our approach to value chain innovation. Chemistry and materials science innovations are fundamental to sustainability."

– Neil Hawkins, Chief Sustainability Officer, Dow

"Responsible chemical stewardship remains a priority for our Own Brands team... Our customers vote each time they shop with us on the importance of safer chemicals, and we take very seriously the responsibility and honor that comes with being named a Safer Choice Partner of the Year." –Chad Coester, Albertsons Companies

Senior Vice President of Own Brands

"We are honored to be recognized as an EPA Safer Choice Partner, providing consumers with irresistibly superior household cleaning products that are safe and deliver the cleaning consumers expect from P&G's trusted and well-known brands."

– Shailesh Jejurikar, CEO of P&G Fabric & Home Care



"We're both thrilled and honored to be recognized as a faithful partner in the Safer Choice program."

– Melissa Grimm, Senior Brand Manager, Rust-Oleum



"In 2020, we were the first consumer electronics company to receive the EPA Safer Choice Partner of the Year Award in recognition for our work to scale the use of safer process chemicals and protect those working in our supply chain." –Apple's 2020 Environmental Progress Report



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Safer Choice Program – internal deliberative



# Partner of the Year Award Winners



United States  
Environmental Protection  
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Safer Choice Program – internal deliberative

# Schedule



- ✓ Applications due: May 31
- ✓ Judging process: Scores due July 7
- ✓ Enforcement screening results due: August 4 (August 12)
- Brief leadership on award process and scoring results: August 16
- AA decision on winners: August 18
- Note for AA to send to Administrator: August 19
- Notify award winners and non-winners: August 23
- Congratulatory email to winners: September 23
- Announce winners during P2 week: September 20 - 24
- Suggestion: In lieu of a virtual ceremony, congratulatory email (above) and collaboration with winners on amplification (More on this later)

# Evaluation of 2021 Applications



- Applications submitted: 39
- Total submitted by category:
  - Formulators-Product Manufacturers: 20
  - Retailers: 3
  - Innovators: 6
  - Supporters: 10
- Fourteen judges: EPA HQ (Safer Choice, Energy Star, TRI and P2) and regional staff
- Five judges per application, used common scoring rubric
- For new/novel accomplishments during 2020
- OECA-led enforcement screening and DGAD-led internet search

# Considerations for Awards



- 39 applicants out of a pool of more than 400
  - 20 formulator applicants is < 5% of labeling partnerships
- Typically only the strongest candidates apply
- Quality of applications has improved year over year
- COVID-19 was a competing demand
- FR notice highlighted support of Biden-Harris Administration priorities for EJ and climate change
- Used by winners as a marketing tool

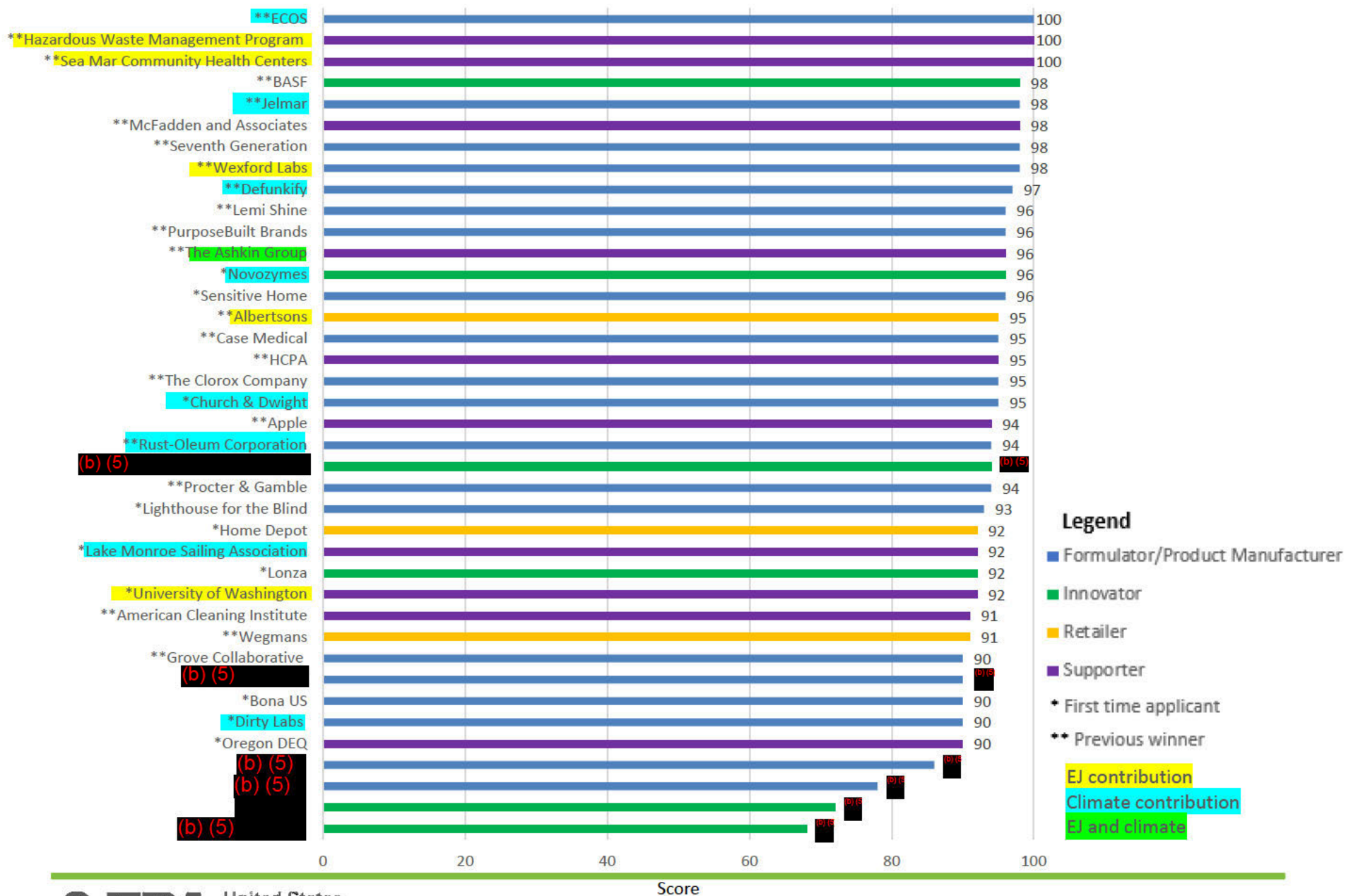
# Previous Award Cycles



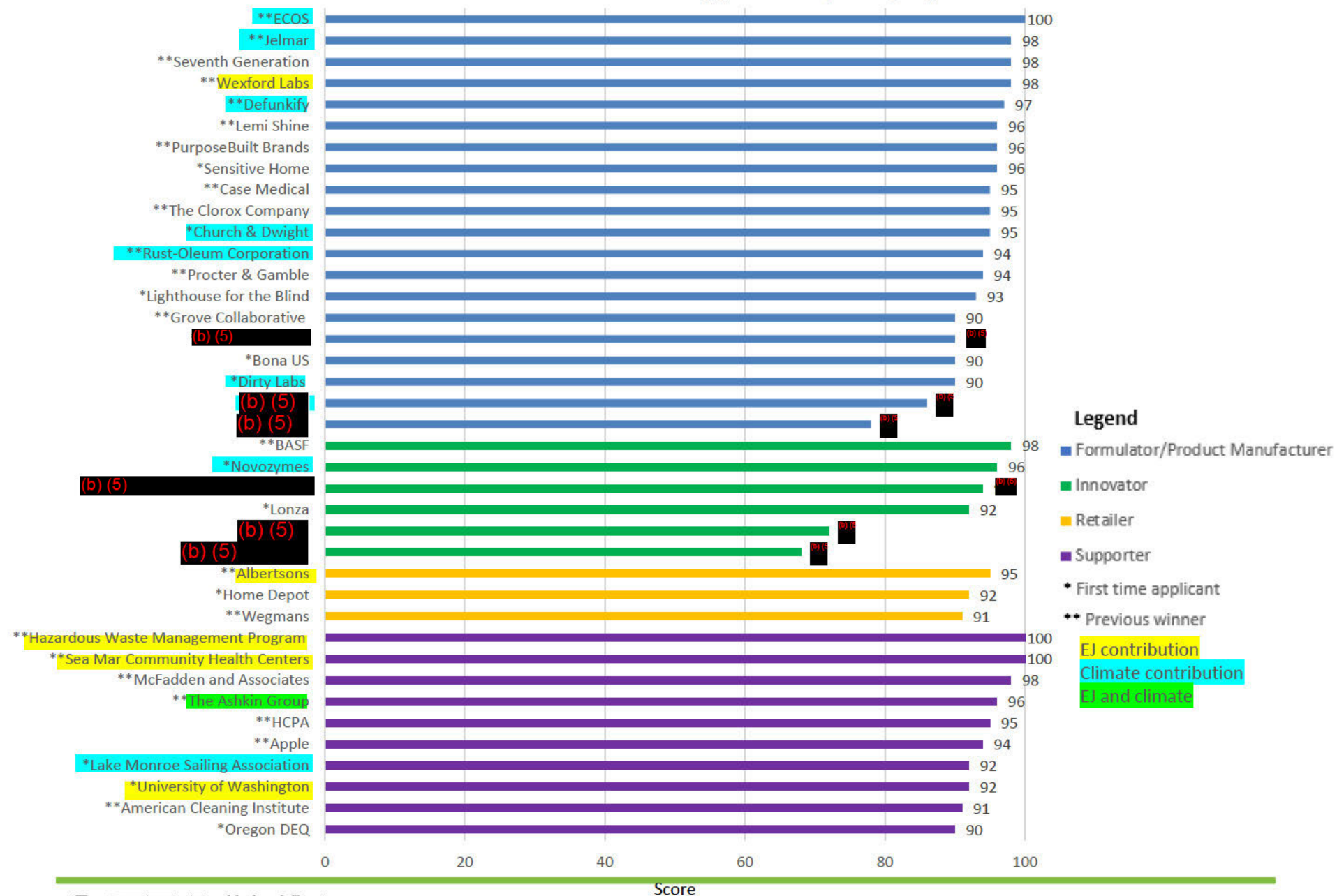
YEAR	Number of Applicants	Number of Winners	Percentages
2015	24	21	87%
2016	31	24	77%
2017	34	33	97%
2018	44	12	27%
2019	29	14	48%
2020	28	18	64%
2021	39	TBD	



## 2021 Partner of the Year Awards: Scores Across all Applicants



# 2021 Partner of the Year Awards: Scores Across all Applicants by Category



# Enforcement Screening



Noted by Region 5 enforcement:

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# Found Through Internet Search



## Home Depot

- April 2021: Consent decree (CD) requires Home Depot to implement a comprehensive, corporate-wide program to ensure that the firms and contractors it hires to perform work are certified and trained to use lead-safe work practices to avoid spreading lead dust and paint chips during home renovation activities. Home Depot will also pay a \$20.75 million penalty, the highest civil penalty obtained to date for a settlement under the Toxic Substances Control Act.
- Case brought by EPA and DOJ for violating EPA's Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule at home renovations performed by Home Depot's contractors across the country. Home Depot subcontracted work to firms that in some cases did not use lead-safe work practices, perform required post-renovation cleaning, provide the EPA-required lead-based paint pamphlets to occupants, or maintain records of compliance with the law. EPA then conducted a comprehensive review of Home Depot's records of renovations performed throughout the United States and identified hundreds of instances in which Home Depot sent uncertified firms to perform renovations that required certified and trained firms.
- (b) (5) [REDACTED]
- (b) (5) [REDACTED]



# Found Through Internet Search



## ExxonMobil

- Per a Scientific American article of 2015, Exxon was aware of the damage that would be caused by climate change as early as 1977. The company allegedly spread misinformation with the apparent intent of shaping public opinion.
  - Exxon is currently being sued by Washington DC, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Delaware, and Connecticut for misleading consumers and shareholders about the risks of climate change.
- In July 2021, in a settlement under CERCLA/RCRA/TSCA, Exxon must pay \$25 million to Puerto Rico for polluting the island's water with MTBE, a chemical additive to gasoline. New Hampshire was awarded over \$235 million in 2016 for drinking water contamination caused by the same chemical.
- (b) (5)

# Found Through Internet Search



## BASF

- In 2020, a Missouri peach farmer was awarded \$265 million for alleged irreparable damage to his orchards due to dicamba drifting from nearby farms.
- BASF is also currently being sued by a group of nearly 60 vineyards in Texas for crop damage caused by dicamba from other farms.
- (b) (5)



# Found Through Internet Search



## P&G

- P&G settled a class action lawsuit alleging that their Charmin brand Freshmates Flushable Wipes were inappropriately marketed as “flushable,” “septic safe,” and “safe for sewer and septic systems” in July 2020. They agreed to make changes to the labeling of the wipes and provide class members partial cash refunds.
- (b) (5)

# Found Through Internet Search



## Wegmans

- A coalition of Hanover County, VA residents and the local NAACP chapter have filed a lawsuit in 2021 to overturn a CWA permit issued by the State Water Control Board to allow a Wegmans distribution center to be built. The facility is planned for 219 acres in a rural county where residents say it would negatively impact a historic Black community called Brown Grove and destroy nearly 15 acres of forested wetlands.
- (b) (5)

# Found Through Internet Search



## University of Washington

- Five Black officers with the University of Washington Police Department have filed claims of racism against the department and are seeking \$8 million in damages, alleging they were routinely insulted and demeaned by co-workers and supervisors.
- (b) (5) [REDACTED]

# Awards Announcement vs. Ceremony



- We recommend a high-profile announcement of the winners and an EPA HQ & Regional collaboration to amplify with the winners
- Ceremony – we recommend not holding a ceremony this cycle
  - Historically in-person; but the COVID situation makes an in-person ceremony impractical
  - Greatest value of a ceremony was the personal contact and photos with the Assistant Administrator
  - A virtual ceremony with remarks from Michal and 3-minute presentations from each winner would be a longer meeting and would not offer the benefits of an in-person meeting
  - Other investments in the Safer Choice program may be more valuable
- Could acknowledge 2021 winners at a 2022 ceremony or as part of the Safer Choice Summit, if held
- Option: Hold a virtual meeting with winners in the fall, separate from EPA's announcement of the winners
  - Congratulate winners
  - Discuss winners' ideas on how the Safer Choice program can further Agency priorities such as EJ

# Communications – provided you agree to forego a ceremony



- Timing Suggestion: Announcement of winners during P2 week
- Safer Choice website – post winner summaries
- News release
- Social Media
- In lieu of a virtual awards ceremony, take the following actions and enhance collaboration with winners
  - Congratulatory note or letter
  - Winner press releases coordinated with an EPA release
  - Regional amplification
  - Possible events with Administrator and RAs, COVID-dependent
  - More under development with regions and OPS

# Next Steps/ Decisions



- Address enforcement screen results
- Choose threshold for granting the Partner of the Year award
- Assuming you are okay with foregoing an awards ceremony, we can announce the winners during P2 week
- Would you like a (likely virtual) meeting in the fall to congratulate winners and discuss how the Safer Choice program could better support Administration priorities?



# Additional Info



# Scoring Rubric



Criteria	Formulators / Product Manufacturers	Purchasers & Distributors	Retailers	Innovators	Supporters (entities who advance the use of safer chemicals)
Participation in Safer Choice program and use of Safer Choice label/use of safer chemicals in products	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Promotion and use of Safer Choice-certified products/products with safer chemicals	30	35	35	N/A	N/A
Communication on Safer Choice to consumers and end-users	10	35	35	25	65
Innovations in safer chemistry and other efforts to advance Safer Choice, environmental protection, and environmental justice	20	30	30	75	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

